

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 5 and 7-9 are pending. Withdrawn claims 1-4 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claim 6 is also canceled. Claims 5 and 7 are amended. Claim 5 is independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 6-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. In response, independent claim 5 is amended herein to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 6. Claim 6 is now canceled.

Therefore, independent claim 5 is in condition for allowance.

Claim for Priority

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has acknowledged the Applicants' claim for foreign priority.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 5, 2004, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has made the Restriction Requirement final, and has withdrawn claims 1-4 from further consideration. By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled non-elected claims 1-4. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to claims 1-4 at a later date if so desired.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (WO 00/13997) in view of Brookman et al.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, and as noted above, independent claim 5 is amended herein to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to claim 6. Claim 6 is now canceled.

Therefore, independent claim 5 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner will note that dependent claim 7 is amended to depend from claim 5.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

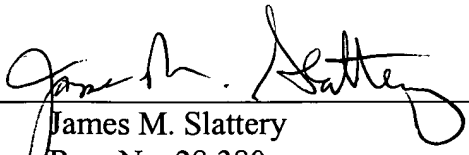
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.


If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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